

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, October 19, 1896, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL New Beyer House, Oconto, Wis. October 19th, 1896. My dear Mabel:

Reached here last night from Marinette — late at night. I wish this journey was over for I don't like it at all. I came here specially to examine the little schools, but I find that Mr. Spencer has made arrangements for me wherever I go — to address public meetings of citizens on the education of the deaf — and I feel as if Mr. Spencer is making a sort of exhibition of me for the benefit of the Wisconsin system of deaf schools.

What I specially dislike is the distribution, before my face, to all these audiences, of pamphlets containing my picture and containing commendatory notices of myself that make me feel like a Dime Museum Freak. The moment we go outside of the State this must be stopped. I cannot stand it at Minneapolis.

I was delighted with the little school at Oshkosh under Mrs. Holden — but the school at Marinette, under Miss Ellis, is not doing proper work. Both are new schools, only open since September. Miss Ellis has evidently mistaken her vocation in life. She is devoted to her children and to the cause — but she hasn't got “a capacity.” — And unfortunately no money can buy it for her.

I came here to encourage and not to criticize — but I felt obliged in the interests of these little deaf children, to tell the Superintendent of Public Schools, confidentially, my 2 opinion; — and I asked him to see the Oshkosh School started at the same time as his and note the difference.

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“All aboard for the train” shouts the Hotel omnibus man — so must postpone further communication.

Your loving husband, Alec. Mrs. A. G. Bell, Washington, D. C.